

For the Children

A LAUGH IN THE CHURCH.

She sat on the sliding cushion,
The dear, wee woman of four;
Her feet, in their shiny slippers,
Hung dangling over the floor.
She meant to be good; she had promised,
And so, with her big, brown eyes,
She stared at the meeting-house windows
And counted the crawling flies.

She looked far up at the preacher,
But she thought of the honey-bees
Droning away at the blossoms
That whitened the cherry trees.

She thought of a broken basket,
Where curled in a dusky heap,
Four sleek, round puppies, with fringy ears,
Lay snuggled and fast asleep.

Such soft, warm bodies to cuddle,
Such queer little hearts to beat,
Such swift, round tongues to kiss,
Such sprawling, cushiony feet;
She could feel in her clasping fingers
The touch of the satiny skin,
And a cold, wet nose exploring
The dimples under her chin.

Then a sudden ripple of laughter
Ran over the parted lips
So quick that she could not catch it
With her rosy finger tips.
The people whispered, "Bless the child,"
As each one waked from a nap,
But the dear, wee woman hid her face
For shame in her mother's lap.

—Ex.

CAP, THE FIRE DOG.

Cap had lived with the firemen ever since he could remember. He had been brought to the station when he was only a little puppy, and every fireman loved him and declared that Cap was the wisest dog that he had ever seen.

One fireman had taught Cap to stand on his hind feet and say, "Bow-wow!" whenever he was hungry. Another fireman had taught him to scratch the floor below the water faucet and bark whenever he was thirsty.

He could walk on his hind feet, drink from the fire hose, and drag the hose about whenever he was told to do so.

The chief of the fire department said that Cap could do more "tricks" than any dog he had ever seen, and the best one of all he had learned to do without ever having been told how to do it.

The firemen slept upstairs over the station in long rows of white beds, and, whenever the fire bell rang in the night, the firemen would spring from their beds, dress before you could say "Jack Robinson," run to the four large holes in the floor, and come sliding down the poles one after another; then they would

run to the horses, which at the sound of the bell had found their places in front of the engine, the hose-cart, the hook-and-ladder wagon, and the chief's cart, buckle on the harness, and each fireman would spring into place ready to drive away to the fire.

Cap longed to slide down the poles as the firemen did, but, of course, that was something no dog could do. So, if he happened to be upstairs, as he often was, when the fire bell rang in the daytime, he would run to the stairway, clear the steps at three bounds, and spring on the seat beside the chief.

But at night Cap stayed downstairs, sleeping very near the telephone and fire-bell; and, when the alarm sounded, the firemen would hear Cap's loud "Bow-wow!" almost as soon as they heard the bell and, no matter how quickly they dressed, they would always find Cap in his place ahead of them.

"He is the best fireman in the station," the chief would sometimes say. "He is always dressed and ready for work." And the firemen would laugh and pat Cap's head, and say that if they slept in their clothes as Cap did, they, too, would be ready and in their places in one minute.

But no fireman ever slept after the bell rang, and not one of them was ever known to say, "Wait a minute," or, "I am too sleepy to go." Even the horses would run to their places the instant they heard the bell, so Cap thought it his place to do the same.

One night there was a great storm, and something happened to the telephone and firebells, so that they could not ring; and in the night time, when all was dark and still, and all the firemen and the fire horses were sound asleep, a house caught fire, and the policeman on the street corner ran to the telephone to call the firemen out.

The fire bell tried its best to ring; but, instead of a loud Ding-a-ling," it could say nothing more than "Bz-z."

Not a fireman heard it.

Not even a fire horse moved.

"Bz-z!" said the bell again, and suddenly Cap opened his eyes, and with a loud "Bow-wow-wow!" sprang to his place in the chief's cart.

The firemen rolled out of their beds, and each one asked: "Did you hear that? Did the fire bell ring?" And the answer came: "No, it was only Cap barking; but he is certainly saying 'fire.' We had better dress and slide down and see about it."

"Bow-wow!" bow-wow-wow!" barked Cap.

"B-z-z-z!" said the bell just as the first fireman came sliding down the pole.

"Fire!" shouted the fireman. "Cap was right. Come on!" And in a moment there was a clattering of many hoofs as the fire horses dashed to their places, the jingling of harness as it dropped into place on the horses' backs, shouts of "Fire, keep out of the street!" from the policemen in front of the station, and "cling, clang, clang!" from the gongs of the engine, the hose cart, the hook-and-ladder wagon and the chief's cart as they dashed away down the street.

The fire was soon found and put out; and, when the people who lived in the burning house came out to thank the firemen, the chief patted Cap on the head and said: "Do not thank us. Thank Cap. He is the